



WISCONSIN STATE ASSEMBLY

STATE REPRESENTATIVE
DON VRUWINK

43rd DISTRICT

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Rep. Vruwink on Budget: Missed Opportunities

State Representative Don Vruwink (D-Milton) issued the following statement today on the Wisconsin state budget bill:

“This budget is a missed opportunity to address some of the problems our state is enduring.

For example, rural broadband. We’re not making broadband much of a priority by doling out grants to only a few communities when we should make the commitment to provide high-speed Internet to every rural area in Wisconsin. High-speed broadband should be a public service like electricity and water. I hear from business owners across Wisconsin who know they could do much more business and contribute much more to our economy if they had reliable, affordable high-speed Internet. We should not be putting all of our money into one pot when it comes to job creation. What may be good for Southeastern Wisconsin is not necessarily good for the rest of Wisconsin.

“The second problem we did not address is transportation funding. I get emails, phone calls & letters on a weekly basis from people across my district who want their roads fixed. Instead of creating a sustainable funding source for transportation, we’re relying on borrowing and stealing money from the general fund. It’s difficult to borrow your way to success. In this budget, road projects that have been approved by the Legislature and the Department of Transportation are stopped or delayed, meaning greater costs for those projects in the future. Taking money from the general fund of taxpayer dollars means less money for our schools, roads, cities, towns and villages.

“Third, we missed the opportunity to address teacher pay. I’m concerned rural school districts will not be able to keep teachers because they are being lured away by wealthier districts. Young people are not being attracted to the profession of teaching. At the campus I represent, UW-Whitewater, professors have gone eight years without a pay increase. And even though in this budget they are scheduled to get one, two percent does not make up for eight years of stagnant pay. It has taken a toll, with professors leaving for more lucrative pay. At UW-Stevens Point, where I earned my bachelor’s degree, budget cuts have forced layoffs. For a university that has a global reputation for natural resources research and education, that is abominable.”

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